

PugetSoundPartnership

our sound, our community, our chance

Strategic Plan 2009-2011

2009-2011



“Saving Puget Sound is the topic of the day, the topic of the year, the topic of the decade.” *Jean-Michel Cousteau*

The Puget Sound Partnership

The Puget Sound Partnership is a community effort of citizens, governments, tribes, scientists and businesses working together to restore and protect Puget Sound.

Despite its size, Puget Sound is ecologically delicate; and while its symptoms of trouble are not easily visible, they are undeniable and getting worse.

The charge given to the Puget Sound Partnership by Governor Gregoire and the Legislature is to create a real Action Agenda that turns things around and leads to a healthy Puget Sound.

Our Action Agenda will prioritize cleanup and improvement projects, coordinate federal, state, local, tribal and private resources, and make sure that we are all working cooperatively. We are basing decisions on science, focusing on actions that have the biggest impact, and will hold people and organizations accountable for results.

Our goal is to make Puget Sound healthy again, and create a roadmap for how to get it done. If we work together, we can have both a thriving Puget Sound economy and a clean and healthy Puget Sound ecosystem.



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The Puget Sound Partnership is pleased to submit its strategic plan for the 2009-2011 budget and beyond.

The Puget Sound Partnership is pleased to submit its strategic plan for the 2009-2011 biennium. The strategic direction for the ecosystem wide Puget Sound initiative will be reflected in the 2020 Action Agenda that will be submitted to the legislature on December 1, 2008. The Action Agenda will provide the roadmap for a coordinated effort by state and federal agencies, local and tribal governments as well as non-profits, businesses and citizen groups to restore a healthy Puget Sound by 2020. This strategic plan will focus on those steps and resources necessary to build the capacity of the new agency the Puget Sound Partnership to lead and coordinate this effort successfully.

Mission:

The Puget Sound Partnership leads and coordinates efforts supported by science, embraced by the public and proved effective by results to leave a legacy of a healthy Puget Sound for future generations.

Core Values:

- Leadership
- Science
- Innovation and Risk Taking
- Transparency and Accountability
- Adaptation and Organizational Learning
- Citizen and Stakeholder Collaboration and Respect

Statutory Authority:

The Puget Sound Partnership (the Partnership) was established as a sub-cabinet agency on July 1, 2007, replacing its predecessor the Puget Sound Action Team and the Puget Sound Water Quality Authority before it, with a newly conceived mission and set of responsibilities. The Partnership assumed its new mantle under the provisions of RCW 90.71.200 to meet the goal of the State of Washington to restore a healthy Puget Sound by 2020. The chapter directs the Partnership to "...define a strategic Action Agenda prioritizing necessary actions... that will be based on science and include clear, measurable goals for the recovery of the Puget Sound by 2020." All governmental entities including federal and state agencies, tribes, cities, counties, ports and special purpose districts are intended to follow the direction of the Action Agenda. The Partnership is directed by Chapter 90.71 to "...determine accountability for performance, oversee the efficiency and effectiveness of money spent, educate and engage the public, and track and report the results to the legislature, the governor and the public." The Partnership has no regulatory authority.

The following agency goals and objectives are explicitly defined in the statute creating the Partnership. The strategy of achieving these goals and objectives through the creation of an Action Agenda is also based on statute.



Partnership Goals for the Puget Sound Ecosystem:

1. A healthy human population supported by a healthy Puget Sound that is not threatened by changes in the ecosystem.
2. A quality of human life that is sustained by a functioning Puget Sound ecosystem.
3. Healthy and sustaining populations of native species in Puget Sound, including a robust food web.
4. A healthy Puget Sound where freshwater, estuary, nearshore, marine, and upland habitats are protected, restored, and sustained.
5. An ecosystem that is supported by ground water levels as well as river and stream flow levels sufficient to sustain people, fish, and wildlife, and the natural functions of the environment.
6. Fresh and marine waters and sediments of a sufficient quality so that the waters in the region are safe for drinking, swimming, shellfish harvest and consumption, and other human uses and enjoyment, and are not harmful to the native marine mammals, fish, birds, and shellfish of the region.

“This is our last good chance to protect Puget Sound. Saving Puget Sound is on the national political radar screen now.”

David Dicks, executive director, Puget Sound Partnership

Partnership Objectives for the Puget Sound Ecosystem Restoration Effort:

1. Protect existing habitat and prevent further losses.
2. Restore habitat functions and values.
3. Significantly reduce toxics entering Puget Sound fresh and marine waters.
4. Significantly reduce nutrients and pathogens entering Puget Sound fresh and marine waters.
5. Improve water quality and habitat by managing storm water runoff.
6. Provide water for people, fish and wildlife and the environment.
7. Protect ecosystem biodiversity and recover imperiled species.
8. Build and sustain capacity for action.

The strategies to reach these goals and achieve these objectives by 2020 will form the heart of the Action Agenda that will be adopted by December 1, 2008. In the interim, the Leadership Council has approved the following initial strategic priorities to guide state agency budget requests in advance of the final Action Agenda.

- A. Ensure that activities and funding are focused on the most urgent and important problems facing the Sound
- B. Protect the intact ecosystem processes that sustain Puget Sound
- C. Implement restoration projects that will reestablish ecosystem processes
- D. Prevent the sources of water pollution

The Action Agenda will contain an assessment of factors internal and external to the restoration efforts, integration of salmon

Sound Salmon Recovery Council and watersheds will work collaboratively with the Partnership regarding salmon recovery. Although it is not included in statute, the Partnership will collaborate with the Hood Canal Coordinating Council to implement the recovery plan for summer chum. The Partnership staff will work with the region, as well as individual watersheds to implement and accelerate programs to: protect existing and restore habitat functions; to enhance fresh water flows where needed; and otherwise facilitate the NOAA Fisheries-approved Chinook recovery plan. The Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan is one cornerstone of Sound-wide recovery efforts and will be integrated into the broader ecosystem effort contained in the Action Agenda.

The analysis that follows focuses on the challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives for the Partnership to establish itself as a persuasive and credible leader that can effectively mobilize a broad-based effort to achieve a healthy Puget Sound by 2020.

“We have to be willing to be straight about what’s working and what is not working. We’ve got to be willing to stand back and say, as I think we would all acknowledge, it isn’t working. For a lot of reasons. And it is not to point fingers at people. It’s just to say, we don’t need incremental change.”

David Dicks, executive director, Puget Sound Partnership

recovery and other plans, as well as targets for performance. As part of the Action Agenda, the Partnership, under RCW 77.85.090(3), provides that the Leadership Council shall serve as the regional salmon recovery organization for Puget Sound salmon species. The Puget

Performance Analysis: Positioning the Puget Sound Partnership for Success

The original analysis published in December 2006, Sound Health, Sound Future, provides the basis for the legislation creating the Partnership. It explores at length the successes and shortcomings of previous attempts to provide leadership by the Puget Sound Action Team and the Puget Sound Water Quality Authority to all those engaged in protecting and cleaning up the Puget Sound. The Sound Health, Sound Future analysis also draws on lessons learned from other initiatives around the country to lead and coordinate large ecosystem protection and restoration efforts, including the oldest one in the Chesapeake Bay. The structure and mission defined for the Partnership in statute reflects recommendations from the U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO). The GAO based its

comments on studies of other large ecosystem restoration projects.

Recommendation: A decision-making body to set overall direction and priorities, and to resolve conflicts.

Current status: The Partnership is led by a seven-member decision-making body, the Leadership Council. The Executive Director will recommend priorities and strategies in the Action Agenda for ultimate approval by the Leadership Council. The processes by which the Leadership Council will resolve conflicts need to be designed and put into practice during the next biennium.

Recommendation: A system whereby responsible parties are held accountable for fulfilling commitments.

Current Status: Agencies report on actions contained in the existing 2007-2009 Puget Sound Conservation and Recovery Plan through the Governor's Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) process. The Partnership will develop processes, systems and requirements to track and report on the success of implementing entities in fulfilling their commitments to the Action Agenda.

Recommendation: A system to ensure that funding is clearly linked to outcomes and that all funds received and spent are tracked and accounted for.

Current Status: Funding for activities beneficial to the Puget Sound are not coordinated and linked to an integrated set of goals or priorities. The Action Agenda will align Puget Sound ecosystem goals with activities. The Partnership will track funding and assign performance measures to activities included in the Action Agenda.

Recommendation: Independent and transparent review and reporting on results and progress, and a structure to track progress.

“ In a way, we are in a race against time if we are serious about protecting and restoring the health of Puget Sound.”

*Kathy Fletcher, member, Puget Sound Partnership
Ecosystem Coordination Board*

Current Status: The Partnership is directed by statute to report to the Governor and the Legislature every two years, beginning November 1, 2009, through the State of the Sound report. The report will comment on progress by implementing entities, use of state funds, actions inconsistent with the Action Agenda and disposition by the Leadership Council of citizen concerns brought to the Partnership. The Science Panel will comment on progress in the ecosystem and in efforts to expand through science an understanding of the Puget Sound and strategies useful to advancing progress. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) will conduct an independent review of the Partnership's results in implementing the Action Agenda by December 1, 2011.

Building infrastructure and the organizational capacity to support these reports will be the challenge of the 2009-2011 biennium. A performance framework for progress in the ecosystem will rely on selection of indicators and building a monitoring and data management system to support tracking those indicators. A performance framework for commitments by implementing entities requires designing an accountability system that includes both processes, such as performance agreements and a data management system, that can track both projects and funding. Roles and responsibilities for the Leadership Council, the Ecosystem Coordination Board, the Science Panel and Partnership staff will be clarified to support the various processes and tasks integral to the Partnership's mission.

Assessment of External

Challenges and Opportunities

The complicated interaction of challenges and threats to the ecosystem and the health of Puget Sound will be addressed in the Action Agenda. The following table highlights some of the challenges and opportunities facing the Puget Sound Partnership as a new agency with the ambitious mission of mobilizing stakeholders to restore the Sound to health by 2020.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Limited time to act	Increasing urgency to propel action
Projected budget shortfalls	Receptivity to creative financing strategies
	Increased efficiencies through collaboration, coordination and leadership
Rising expectations of stakeholders	Momentum to engage stakeholders in meaningful action
Public perception that there is no problem with the Puget Sound	Educate, inform and mobilize the public
Diverse conclusions about the nature of the problems with the Sound and best choice of management actions	Unity of purpose around restoring Puget Sound to health
Limited success in other large ecosystem restoration projects to guide the way	Opportunity to work in tangent with other similar efforts around the country
Complexity of the ecosystem	Opportunity for focused scientific work to guide management actions
Institutional arrangements supporting the Puget Sound restoration effort do not currently support an ecosystem approach	Opportunity to critique and adjust the institutional arrangements to allow for an ecosystem approach to coordinated action
Overlapping and sometimes contradictory regulatory systems governing growth and development	Multitude of existing programs and projects that have been or are being implemented successfully
Inadequate and outdated water rights/allocation system	Population and employment growth present opportunities to redevelop sustainably
International jurisdiction over part of the ecosystem	Statewide focus on need to address impacts from climate change and shared salmon harvest



Agency Goals

GOAL 1: Establish the Puget Sound Partnership as a credible and effective leader in implementing the Action Agenda with state agencies, federal, local and tribal governments, nongovernmental organizations, business interests, as well as citizens and their communities.

STATEWIDE RESULTS:

- Improve the quality of Washington's environment.
- Improve the ability of state government to achieve results efficiently and effectively.

OBJECTIVE: Provide a compelling Action Agenda to the Governor, the Legislature, implementing entities, the scientific community and the public around which they will enthusiastically rally and coordinate their actions, funding and priorities to advance the goal of a healthy Puget Sound by 2020.

STRATEGY: Develop and implement the Action Agenda to align ecosystem goals with measurable outcomes, priorities for action, priorities for study and sources of funding.

ACTIVITY: Identify implementing entities that may include the Partnership to make

commitments to priorities and actions on the Action Agenda.

MEASURE: Increase in annual funding of priority actions identified as consistent with the Action Agenda.

ACTIVITY: Revise the Action Agenda as needed to reflect lessons learned from implementation, new scientific information or changing needs of the ecosystem.

MEASURE: The Leadership Council evaluates the Action Agenda by June 2010 and makes revisions as necessary.

GOAL 2: Build and sustain support for long-term implementation of actions needed to protect and restore the Puget Sound ecosystem.

STATEWIDE RESULTS:

- Improve the overall performance and customer service of state government.
- Increase citizen satisfaction with state government.

OBJECTIVE: Work with stakeholders and citizens to ensure they stay engaged and supportive of the strategies, actions, and financial requirements of restoring and sustaining a healthy Puget Sound.

STRATEGY: Conduct Partnership business in an open, public and collaborative manner, responsive to the concerns of stakeholders and citizens.

ACTIVITY: Maintain a comprehensive web site that details Partnership decisions, meetings and activities.

MEASURES: Percent of surveyed web users expressing satisfaction with web site content.

ACTIVITY: Conduct a concerted public education and outreach program.

MEASURE: Percent of citizens surveyed expressing awareness of Puget Sound's environmental problems and support for restoration efforts.

ACTIVITY: Establish venues for collaboration with and input from stakeholders such as: Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board and Science Panel meetings; watershed councils; Puget Sound caucuses for state agencies, federal agencies and environmental groups; and meetings throughout Puget Sound in each of the Action Areas.

MEASURE: Percent of environmental, state and federal caucus participants and Salmon Recovery Council members surveyed assessing the Partnership's processes as open, transparent and accessible to them.

ACTIVITY: Endorse and direct funding toward innovative ideas and projects conceived and supported at the local level that are consistent with the Action Agenda.

MEASURE: Number of new projects proposed by local partners that are funded and implemented.

GOAL 3: Continually improve the scientific basis for management actions in the Puget Sound.

STATEWIDE RESULTS:

- Improve the quality of Washington's environment.
- Improve the ability of state government to achieve results efficiently and effectively.

OBJECTIVE: Ensure that decisions about strategies and actions are informed by scientific findings about the functioning of the Puget Sound ecosystem.

STRATEGY: Develop and implement a Strategic Science Program to include scientific studies, information management, and science education and outreach by which the Partnership will develop and disseminate scientific findings that address key uncertainties about ecosystem-based management for Puget Sound.

ACTIVITY: Implement priority scientific studies of the functioning of the Puget Sound ecosystem and the effects of management actions as identified in the Partnership's biennial science work plan.

MEASURES:

- Percent of studies recommended in the biennial science work plan that are implemented.
- Percent of studies linked directly to a management action in the Action Agenda.

ACTIVITY: Fund, develop and implement monitoring studies to report on the condition and trajectory of the Puget Sound ecosystem and threats to the ecosystem related to the goals and objectives of the Action Agenda.

MEASURES:

- Number of Action Agenda goals and strategies with measurable ecosystem outcomes.
- Number of environmental indicators for which the Action Agenda adopts clear, quantifiable interim

milestones (benchmarks) and targets to be achieved by 2020.

ACTIVITY: Facilitate the communication of science findings throughout the scientific community to: all parts of the Partnership; to policy makers and leaders; and to the region's citizens.

MEASURES: Puget Sound science update disseminated in 2010 and thereafter as needed to reflect new scientific understandings.

GOAL 4: Build and implement a comprehensive system with defined processes, roles and responsibilities as well as technology resources to track the results of the entities implementing the Action Agenda.

STATEWIDE RESULTS:

- Improve the quality of Washington's environment.
- Improve the ability of state government to achieve results efficiently and effectively.

OBJECTIVE: Ensure the Action Agenda is implemented effectively, efficiently and as comprehensively as possible.

STRATEGY: Place the Action Agenda within a performance management framework that integrates adaptive management and tracking of ecosystem performance measures, funding and the success of implementing entities in meeting their commitments.

ACTIVITY: Build an information system to support tracking actions, funding and performance measures included in the Action Agenda.

MEASURE: Percent of actions entered into the database that includes a responsible person, funding and performance measures.

“ Puget Sound is one of the driving forces of our economy. The reason we have more jobs than the rest of the nation, the reason we have more people moving in here, is because people love Puget Sound and what it brings. I can't run a business, we can't grow unless we have a thriving community and community is defined as the natural community as well as the built community.”

Peter Orser, president, Quadrant Homes

Assessment of Internal Capacity and Financial Outlook

Staffing Capacity

The Puget Sound Partnership staffing level is currently at 26 FTEs as it develops the Action Agenda and plans systems for implementing the Action Agenda. Once the Action Agenda is approved and the Partnership begins to track and evaluate the Action Agenda—the strategies on which it is based and the activities contained within it—the functions of the Partnership will change markedly. New business processes and revised roles and responsibilities for staff will be required. The Partnership is staff to four boards: the Leadership Council; Ecosystem Coordination Board; Science Panel and the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council. The Partnership also supports the Watershed Leads group. The Executive Director will assess and propose staffing patterns to support these boards as well as the critical initiatives and processes that will be the focus of the 2009-2011 biennium.

Facility Requirements

Partnership staff is currently located in two facilities as well as in regional offices. Some are housed in temporary offices in Seattle while others work from the fourth floor of the General Administration building on the Capitol Campus

in Olympia as directed by the Governor. The Partnership will share space in the proposed Urban Waters complex in Tacoma, slated for completion in late 2009. Over the coming biennium, the Partnership will relocate staff currently housed in temporary offices in Seattle. Olympia staff will also relocate from the General Administration Building once it is demolished in early 2009 to another site within Olympia.

Technology Infrastructure

As part of the Action Agenda, the Partnership will define its technology needs. The information needs of coordinating all of the efforts through the Puget Sound region will be extensive and complex. The Partnership will need the ability to consolidate project data from implementing entities within the state as well as beyond state agencies, so progress, cost and environmental outcomes can be tracked and reported to the Governor and to the Legislature. Data related to the ecosystem or environmental indicators may reside in systems outside the Partnership, but the Partnership will want to lead an effort to make monitoring data more easily and widely available to the public and the scientific community. The Partnership does not have the assets, equipment or staff to support the needs of the entire system, but will partner with federal government and other agencies to build its capacity in this area.

Financial Outlook

The Partnership has two major sources of funding: the state operating budget and federal appropriations. The state budget is necessary to fund basic operations of the agency and implement the goals and strategies outlined in the strategic plan. Sources of these funds include the state General Fund, the Water Quality Account, the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account and the State Toxics Account. The Partnership also receives approximately \$1.4 million a biennium from the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to implement the Partnership's duties as the salmon recovery organization for Puget Sound. RCO funding for regional salmon recovery organizations comes primarily

through the Department of Commerce Pacific Salmon Recovery Fund (PACSRF). This funding is generally stable, but there is the potential for reduced funding from this federal source. The Partnership does not charge any fees or generate any revenue to fund its operations. There was a ramp up of funding for the Partnership in the 2007-09 biennium. Depending upon actions assigned to the Partnership by the Leadership Council there may be a need for additional state funds for the Partnership in upcoming biennia.

Puget Sound Partnership is designated as the lead entity for integrating estuary and watershed protection programs for Puget Sound under the National Estuary Program (Section 320 of the Clean Water Act). As a result, the Partnership has received approximately \$600,000 a year in the federal budget for agency programs and operations. This is matched by an equal amount of state funding. It is anticipated that this funding will continue at current levels. The FFY 2008 federal budget also provided \$20 million to the Environmental Protection Agency for development and implementation of the Action Agenda. This funding will be used for development of the Action Agenda as well as implementation of near-term science and monitoring programs and on-the-ground projects. Some of this funding is likely to come to the Partnership to implement science and monitoring projects. It is unclear if this funding will be provided to EPA on an ongoing basis.

Finally, the Partnership has formed a nonprofit organization to raise private funds and undertake Puget Sound restoration and/or education programs. Although it is unlikely that funding from the nonprofit will come directly to the Partnership, there may be opportunities to partner on projects and activities and stretch the use of state and federal funds.

Major Initiatives and Projects for 2009-2011

Coordinate implementation of the actions in the



Action Agenda:

- Build a comprehensive information system to support the needs of the Action Agenda, including the performance management system, the monitoring program and the finance strategy.
- Match willing implementers with actions and sources of funding.
- Facilitate implementing entities' efforts to implement the Action Agenda with technical and management assistance.
- Provide staff to implement strategic actions that are appropriate for the Partnership.
- Continue to integrate salmon recovery efforts into the Sound-wide recovery efforts by implementing actions in the Chinook Recovery Plan.
- Evaluate progress on the Action Agenda and revise the Action Agenda by May 2010.
- Continue to refine and implement a financing strategy to fund the Action Agenda through 2020.
- Implement the Strategic Science Plan and Biennial Science Work Plan
- Continue to refine a coordinated monitoring program to support the Action Agenda.
- Refine indicators to translate Partnership objectives into clear, measureable goals.
- Design and implement effectiveness of studies for selected management actions.
- Ensure that key scientific information gaps are being filled.
- Conduct an ongoing public education and outreach campaign.
- Manage ongoing relations with stakeholders, the Legislature and the Governor's Office.
- Establish the Puget Sound Partnership as replacing the Puget Sound Action Team as manager of Puget Sound restoration efforts under the National Estuary Program.

